

HOUSE RESOLUTION 242

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to commend Judge Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr., for honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Judge Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr., is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Judge Sugarmon was born on May 11, 1929, and completed his primary education there before earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rutgers University in 1950 and a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Harvard Law School in 1953; and

WHEREAS, nobly answering the call of duty, Russell Sugarmon served with the United States Army in Japan and earned a letter of commendation for his admirable performance; and

WHEREAS, Judge Sugarmon returned to his hometown of Memphis and began his storied and civic-minded legal career, entering private practice in 1956 and later becoming a founding partner in the firm of Ratner, Sugarmon, Lucas, Willis, and Caldwell; and

WHEREAS, a pioneer in paving the way for future black leaders in Memphis, Russell Sugarmon was the first African-American to conduct a serious bid for a major city office in Memphis when he ran for Public Works Commissioner in 1959; and

WHEREAS, a loyal civil servant, he persevered and, in 1964, won election to the Tennessee Democratic Party Executive Committee and later served as a respected member of the Tennessee Senate; and

WHEREAS, Russell Sugarmon earned the distinction of serving as a Referee in the Memphis Juvenile Court System, a post he filled with great acumen and alacrity from 1976 until 1987; and

WHEREAS, Judge Sugarmon served with probity as a General Sessions Judge for almost twenty years, from 1987 until his retirement in 2006; and

WHEREAS, an active and important part of his community, Judge Sugarmon also contributes his time and numerous talents to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Civil Liberties Union, both of which have recognized him for his sterling efforts on behalf of the Memphis community; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure in the legal field and as a civil servant, Judge Sugarmon has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, he epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Russell Sugarmon's many accomplishments aside, he is fortunate to share the love and companionship of his wife, Regina, his four children, two stepchildren, and seven grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, he is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and Judge Sugarmon should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby commend Judge Russell B. Sugarmon, Jr., for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.